TROY HERALD

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 3, 1873.

ONLY A TINY THING.

'Twas a tiny rosewood thing,
Ebon bound and glittering
With its stars of silver white;
Silver tablet black and bright;
Downy pillowed; satin lined;
That I, loitering, chanced to find
'Mid the dust and scent and gloom
Of the undertakers' room.
Waiting empty—ah, for whom?

Ah, what love-watched cradle bed
Keeps to-night the nestling head,
Or on what soft pillowed breast,
Is the cherub form at rest,
That are long with darkened eye
Sleeping to no lullaby,
Whitely robed, still and cold,
Pale flowers slipping from its hold,
Shall this dainty couch enfold?

Ah, what bitter tears shall stain
All this satin sheet like rain,
And what towering hopes are hid
'Neath this tiny coffin-lid,
Scarcely large enough to bear
Little words that must be there,
Little words cut deep and true,
Bleeding mother's heart anew—
Sweet pet name and "Aged Two!"

Oh, can sorrow's hovering plume
Round our pathway cast a gloom,
Chill and darksome as the shade
By an infant's coffin made?
From our arms an angel flies,
And our startled, dazzled eyes,
Weeping round its vacant place,
Cannot rise its path to trace,
Cannot see the angel's face.

HOW!

Perhaps I am a little too hasty, a little too ready to light up at a minute's notice; but there are some words that seem to me to carry an especial grain of gunpowder in them, and the above is one of the sort. To have a person, after you've been through a long explanation, put his fingers to his mental ears and query you thus, or worse still, "Haow?" is too exasperating for human nature to bear. But that is what John Stringer did to me, bending his head a little nearer, and speaking in an absent, aggravating manner that tantalized me beyond words.

You see John Stringer and I were engaged; we'd been engaged for a long time, and perhaps we'd got to be a little too matter of course to each other.

We were sitting there over the fire, after the old folks had gone to bed, and I fell to telling him about Sophie Mills wedding—her white silk dress, her bride-cake, and her bridesmaids frosted all over to match it, and I ended in this way:

"But it don't make any difference, John, to people that love each other; all that's of no more account than last year's snow-drift. They could be married in calico and homespun, with feet on a rag-carpet like this, and love each other just as well."

"How?" said John, absently. He was watching the coals flicker up and die out again, and picking up a stray chip now and then to fling on the embers—a fashion he had when he was thinking.

Now I had had the headache all day, and I guess I was rather more tindery than usual, though I didn't think so then; but when John bent his great broad shoulders over, as if he hadn't heard a word I said, and in fact, had something better to occupy his mind I just fired up first, and then the blaze died down into sulks, and when we parted that night, John and I had our first and last quarrel.

My heart did not misgive me that when I saw John's great tall figure going out the door it was the last time he'd lift the latch for many a year; but so it was.

You see I held my head pretty high in those days, and I wouldn't show that I was a bit cut up about it, so I paired off with Mrs. Plumber's Jesse, a likely, spruce young fellow enough, but no more to be compared with John than a cockle-shell is to a brigantine.

Oh, well, mother sighed, and tried right hard to bring us together again, but wasn't to be.

John was a powerful muscular man, and I used to see him go up the road many a time when I was out in the shed milking, and peeping out at him through the chinks, I thought his shoulders stooped more than ever, and his figure was growing more stalky-like. Such an awkward fellow as John was! I came near rushing out on him once, with my sunbonnet, and with my sleeves rolled up, and flinging my arms around his neck, but John liked to see folks tidy, and never did it.

Jesse Plumber was the beau of the village—dapper, neat and dainty as you please; and all the girls thought I had come to my senses when I mustered 'em 'o Jess. And by and by it was Jess that came sparking o' winter evenings over the embers, and he was so soft spoken and pleasant that even mother forgot her vexation. (She always set store by John, mother did.) Well, in the spring we were married, and I had a string of pearls and a real silk bridal dress, and felt kind 'o lifted like when the girls crowded round me and hoped I'd be happy. I hoped so, too; I wasn't sure of it.

Remembering the day that came after, I can't recall one hard word I ever heard from Jess. We weren't near enough to each other to quarrel; we just laid apart like two odd volumes; there wasn't any fire 'twixt us, nor anything 'twixt us, either love or laughing, whereas John and I had always been bubbling over one another.

I worked hard, for my silk dress and necklace were all I had of riches; and I cut up my gown one day to make a cloak for the baby. You see, I couldn't give up my pride, and was just as high-spirited as ever. But our farm didn't prosper, and Jesse didn't prosper; and Mrs. Plumber came to live with us, to look after things she said; and she got to pitying him every now and then for marrying a poor wife, and—oh, well, what's the use o' talking?—sometimes I couldn't help wishing John Stringer's strong shoulders were at the wheel, when I was working myself to death morning and night for nothing.

Then, when the baby grew bigger, I took to teaching an A B C class as I used to before I was married; but what little I knew had run wild since then, and I couldn't keep the boys straight somehow; and the girls didn't care about samplers, for the sewing-machine had ridden right over everything. Then Jesse fell ill of the fever, and with all the fuming and fretting and nursing of his mother, and with all my watching day and night, somehow he slipped off between us. And I found myself a widow, with the ill-fared, wasted farm on my hands, and Mother Plumber drizzling and maundering after Jess in a way to break my heart.

But I kept my spirits up yet, and I advertised half the place for sale at the court house; for if I could sell it we could skim through on an acre or two I thought.

Well, who do you suppose came over one sunny afternoon as I was standing in the kitchen? Who, to be sure, but John Stringer, large as life—a little gray, mayhap, and a little angular, but keen and strong as ever. He'd a use for that bit o' land, and had his eye on it along back. "Always was wanting what wasn't his," Mother Plumber said. She owed him a grudge for being more forehanded than Jesse. It took a deal of looking after, and lawyering and surveying and the Lord knows what, to settle it; and I used to see John Stringer's stooping shoulders and broad felt hat down beyond the rise of the meadow time and again. But he scarce ever came near the door, till one day—I can't tell how it was—when the settlements were to be made, I just took baby up stairs and had a good cry; for that bit o' land had been Jesse's favorite piece, and Mother Plumber had been harrying me all day about it.

"The ways of Providence are so strange!" said Mother Plumber, laying her specs down atop o' the Bible, and putting on that awfully pat'ent air which was wearing me to skin and bone—"past finding out. Now if Jesse had married Sophie Mills that was, and you—"

But I did not wait to hear any more. As I say, I just caught up my baby and went off to the garret. And while I sat by the cobwebbed window, Mrs. Barret—Sophie Mills that was—went riding by in her new spring wagon. She had her half-dozen children, round and rosy as a barrel of apples, with her. Sophie nodded and smiled to some one coming up the road, and looking along I saw John Stringer walking thoughtful like, right up to our gate, just as he used to come in courting days—for John never had any foolish way about him. I saw Sophie look back at him as she and the children, with their fluttering ribbons and gay ginghams, disappeared at the turn of the road. Then I smoothed my hair and washed my face, and went down. The time of settlement had come, I knew.

"Mary Ann," said John, gravely, "the lawyer will be here presently; but I reckon we can make it all clear in our own minds without his help. And I've settled it, in fact that there are certain conditions on which I'll take the land—if you agree."

Then I flew into a passion. "You have been long enough making up your mind," says I. "I don't throw my land at anybody's feet, and I haven't asked any favor of you, leastways John Stringer."

"Softly, there, softly!" says John, putting out his hand. "Don't be in a hurry, little woman."

"John Stringer," says I, all in a heat, "you're the same man you were years ago, when you thought I was flying up every time you got out o' temper yourself."

"And weren't you, little woman?" said John, quite gravely. "Don't women folks always like their own way better than anything else?"

"You don't know anything about women," I cried, "any more than you did then. You thought I wanted silks and furbelows more than—than—"

"Than you did me," said John; "and right enough you was, too, if you could have got 'em. I always said so, Mary Ann."

"Any man with half an eye would have known better," says I, hotly.

"How?" said John. His great hulking figure lifted itself up, and he looked at me with those sharp brown eyes that used to give me a start in the olden time. "How?" he repeated softly. "Do you mean to say that I was mistaken years ago?" His big, brown hand was all of a tremble as he held it out to me. "Little woman, little woman," says he, "let's have done with it all now, and it all be as it never was."

Presently Mother Plumber put her head in the door. "'Pears to me that lawyer's making a long spell of it," says she. "Ben't a you most tired of waitin' for him, Mr. Stringer?"

"I guess we've settled it pretty much without the lawyer," said John rising; "and that is the condition I had to propose, Mary Ann—to take you and the meadow land together!"

And he did."

Unlucky Compliments.

I do not agree with those cultivators of grumpiness who denounce all compliments, classing them under the head of flattery. It would be a dingy world if we never said civil things to one another. If I can honestly praise a friend's work, or his conduct, why should I not do so?

If he tells me he liked my last literary effort, I feel encouraged, and applaud his taste; if he informs me that I am looking well, I conclude that certain symptoms which had raised disquieting suspicions were all nervous fancy; if he tells me that he often regrets seeing so little of me, I truly believe that he thinks so at the time. I do not seek to tickle others with false phrases, why should I suspect them of being less sincere.

I am speaking, of course, of the words of the mouth, not the conventionalities of the pen. For I own I am not the humble servant of all the correspondents to whom I profess obedience; and when I present my compliments in writing I mean nothing at all, or at any rate am in perfect ignorance as what my meaning is.

By-the-by, I have known very young men who, in answering a first invitation, have presented their compliments to the lady who proposed herself their hostess.

And why not? If it is a dance their legs are required, and legs are complements; so are ears and tongues and stomachs. Really, the substitution of an "e" for an "i" makes the phrase sense, which it was not before.

But a genuine compliment, with a good foundation of truth, and expressed neatly and aptly, is a moral bonbon, and wholesome enough in moderation, though of course excess in all sweets is cloying.

It is not everybody, however, who knows how to manufacture the article, or how to administer it. If you are any way deficient in tact, or given at all to blunder, you had better let compliments alone altogether, or you may possibly sting the object of your good will, instead of tickling him as intended.

The worst blunder in what was intended for a pretty speech that I ever heard of was perpetrated in modern times by a dignitary of the church, who was asked to marry a young couple in a country place where he happened to be staying, and was also called upon to propose the health of the bride and bridegroom at the subsequent breakfast.

Now the host and hostess were noted in the country round as the most genial and the happiest couple that had ever gone hand in hand through life; so the good divine thought he might as well turn this to account in his speech.

"To sum up all our good wishes for the happy pair whom we have seen united this morning," he said, in conclusion, "we cannot, I am sure, do better than express a desire that the result of their union may prove strictly analagous to that of the parents of the fair bride."

Whereupon the "fair bride" went into hysterics; the bridegroom's eyes flashed daggers; the bridesmaids colored and looked down; the master of the house blew his nose violently. He who had caused all this commotion wisely sat down and held his peace, wondering at the effect of his innocent compliment to the host and hostess.

He soon, however, found some one to enlighten him.

"She is not their daughter at all," his informant explained, "but a niece who came to live with them when her own father and mother were divorced!"

The old farmer, who was dictating his will, took an unusual view of things. He said, "I give and bequeath to my wife the sum of $1,000 a year. Is that writ down?" "Yes," said the lawyer, "but she is not so old but that she marry again. Won't you make any change in that case? Most people do." "Ah! do they? well, write again and say if my wife marry again, I give and bequeath to her $2,000 a year. That'll do, won't it?" "Why, that's just double the sum she would have had if she remained unmarried," said the lawyer. "Ay," said the farmer, "but he that takes her will deserve it."

An old lady from the country with six unmarried daughters, went into Augusta, Ga., the other day, hunting for the Patrons of Husbandry. She meant business.

The American Gentleman of Leisure.

Did the reader ever see a lost dog in a great city? Not a dog recently lost, full of wild anxiety and restless pain and bewilderment, but one who had given up the search for a master in despair, and had become consciously a vagabond? If so, he has seen an animal that has lost his self-respect, traveling in the gutters, slinking along by fences, making acquaintance with dirty boys, becoming a thorough coward, and losing every admirable characteristic of a dog. A cat is a cat even in vagabondage; but a dog that does not belong to somebody is as hopeless a specimen of demoralization as can be found in the superior race among which he has sought in vain for his master. We know him at first sight, and he knows that we know him. The loss of his place in the world, and the loss of his objects of loyalty, personal and official, have taken the significance out of his life and the spirit out of him. He has become a dog of leisure.

We do not know how it may be in trans-Atlantic countries. It is quite possible that in Constantinople, where dogs are plenty and masters comparatively scarce, the canine vagabonds keep each other in countenance. There is a sort of self-respect among human thieves, if only enough of them get together. Where beggars are plenty, there are sometimes generated a sort of professional ambition and a semblance, at least, of professional pride and honor. Liquor-dealers form a society, publish a newspaper, call themselves "Wine Merchants," and make themselves believe that they are respectable. Stock-gamblers in Wall street, by sheer force of numbers in combination, make a business semi-respectable which never added a dollar of wealth to the country and never will, and which constantly places the business interests of the country in jeopardy. So it is possible that in Constantinople lost dogs maintain their self-respect, by community of feeling and a consciousness that they are neither exceptional nor eccentric. A dog's sense of vagabondage would seem, therefore, to depend much upon his atmosphere and circumstances. In New York he loses himself with his home; in Constantinople he joins a community.

The American man of leisure is a sort of lost dog. The people are so busy, they have so long associated personal importance with action and usefulness, that it is all a man's life is worth to drop out of active employment. If a Vanderbilt should quietly release his hold of the vast railroad interests now in his hands, and should never more show his face in Wall street, he would practically shrink to a nonentity. If a Stewart should retire to enjoy his piled-up millions in the quiet repose of his palace, he would cease to be an object of interest to anybody. It is undeniably true that there is nobody in America who has so hard a time as the man of leisure. The man who has nothing to do, and nobody to help him do nothing, may properly be counted among the unfortunate classes, without regard to the amount of wealth he possesses. This is, doubtless, the reason why so many who retire from a life of profitable labor come back, after a few months or years, to their old haunts and old pursuits. They see that the moment they count themselves out of active life, they are counted by their old acquaintances out of the world. They become mere loafers and hangers-on; and a certain sense of vagabondage depresses them. The climate is stimulating, time hangs heavy on their hands, business is exciting, business associations are congenial and attractive; and so they go back to their industries, never to leave them again till sickness or death or old age removes them from the theater of their efforts.

In Europe we know that the case is widely different. The number of men who live upon their estates,—estates either won by trade or inherited from rich ancestors,—is very large, while those who have small, fixed incomes, which they never undertake to increase, is larger still. The Englishman of leisure who cannot live at home on his income goes to the Continent, and seeks a place where his limited number of pounds *per annum* will give him genteel lodgings, with a life of idle leisure. In such a place he finds others in plenty who are as idle as he, and who have come there for the same reason that brings him. He finds it quite respectable to do nothing, and knows that his command of the means that give him leisure is the subject of envy on the part of the inhabitants. He eats, sleeps, reads, visits, writes letters, and kills time without any loss of self-respect, and without feeling the slightest attraction for busier life. Indeed, the tradesmen who are active around him are looked down upon as social inferiors, on account of the fact that they are under the necessity of work. Work is not a genteel thing to do, unless it be done in an office or profession. Shop-keeping and labor of the hands are accounted vulgar.

It seems impossible to conclude that the man of leisure can ever hold a desirable position where labor holds its legitimate position. We wish the American could have more leisure than he has. It would, in many respects, be well for society that m
who have property enough, and t
times more than enough, should r
tire from active life to make place f
others rather than go on accumul
ting gigantic fortunes which becon
curses to their owners and the con
munity. After all, if idleness ca
only be made respectable and desirab
by making labor vulgar, we tru
that the American gentleman of lei
ure will be as rare in the future as h
has been in the past.

We are glad, on the whole, th
every American deems it essential
belong to somebody, to belong
something, to sustain some active r
lation to some industry, or enterpri
or charity, to be counted in at son
point among the useful forces of soc
ety. He is the better and the happi
for it, and he helps to sustain th
honor and self-respect of all tho
with whom labor is a constant n
cessity.—Dr. J. G. Holland in *Scri
ner's*.

A Specimen of Spanish Cruelty.

A most touching instance of hero
ism, and one of the most atrociou
acts of cruelty, the truth of which
vouched for by the most respectab
authority, occurred during the C
lombia struggle for independence.

The Spanish General Morillo, th
most blood-thirsty and treacherou
tool of the Spanish King, was cre
ted Count of Cartagena and Marqu
de la Puerla for services which rath
entitled him to the butcher or hang
man.

While seated in his tent one day h
saw a young boy before him drowne
in tears. The chief demanded of hi
for what purpose he was there.

The child replied that he had com
to beg the life of his father, then
prisoner in Morillo's camp.

"What can you do to save your fa
ther?" asked the general.

"I can do but little, but what I ca
shall be done."

Morillo seized the little fellow's ea
and said:

"Would you suffer your ear to b
taken off to procure your father'
life?"

"I certainly would," was the un
daunted reply.

The boy wept, but did not resis
while the barbarous order was exe
cuted.

"Would you lose your other ea
rather than fail of your purpose?"
was the next question.

"I have suffered much, but for m
father I can suffer still," was the an
swer of the boy.

The other ear was taken off piece
meal, without flinching on the part o
the noble boy.

"And now go!" exclaimed Morillo
untouched by his sublime courage
"the father of such a son must die."

In the presence of his agonized and
vainly suffering son, the patriot fa
ther was executed.

Never did a life picture exhibi
such truthful lights and shades in
national character; such deep, trea
cherous villainy—such lofty, enthu
siastic heroism!

Judge Dean of Pennsylvania, ruled
in the case of E. O. Haberacker, a
teacher charged with assault and bat
tery on one of the pupils in a Tyrone
school, that it does not follow in all
cases that because there has been
beating, therefore it is unlawful.
Though pain and injury have been
inflicted, beating, is the case of a
teacher charged with assault and bat
tery, must go further than the mere
striking before criminal prosecution
can be sustained. Criminality de
pends not on the beating alone, but
upon the degree of force used, and
the cause of the beating. A master
may inflict punishment upon his ap
prentice, a parent upon his child, and
a teacher upon his pupil, without
necessarily being guilty of battery.
But neither parent nor teacher can
beat the child to gratify a cruel or
revengeful disposition, no matter
from what cause revenge may have
risen. The punishment must have
for its object the reformation or good
of the child, or the maintenance of
order in family or school room. Any
teacher who maliciously or cruelly
beats a pupil should, without hesita
tion, be convicted of assault and bat
tery.

The manufacture of railroad cars in
the United States is a very important
industry. There are one hundred
and three establishments devoted ex
clusively to that class of work, thirty-
one of which are situated in Pennsyl
vania. One of the manufactories in
that state has a capacty for turning
out a car, all complete and ready for
use, in forty-six minutes working
time. Besides the above, there are
numerous shops belonging to the va
rious railroad companies, where the
cars used on their roads are con
structed.

Mrs. Perkins, on Friend street, who
has just finished a new house, has
been so much annoyed recently by
lightning-rod men and insurance
agents that as a protection, she put
out a sign stating that four of the
family were ill with the small pox,
but strangers would be cordially re
ceived. A blind beggar was seen to
pause in front of the house for an in
stant the other day, to read the sign,
and then he quickly sought an adjoin
ing street.—Columbus Sunday *News*.